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78 GEORGETOWN 4064

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UNCLAS GEORGETOWN 4064
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TAGS: GY, OREP, (RYAN, LEO)
SUBJECT: FOREIGN DISASTER EMERGENCY RELIEF
REF: A. CARACAS 11175
B. TELCON DIKEOS/COX

SUMMARY: A FOREIGN DISASTER SITUATION EXISTS IN GUYANA AND ALLOTMENT $50,000 IS REQUIRED TO LEASE A STOL-TYPE PLANE FOR ONE MONTH. END SUMMARY

1. PRIME MINISTER FORBES BURNHAM HAS REQUESTED THE UNITED STATES TO PROVIDE THE SERVICES OF ONE STOL PLANE TO OVERCOME DISASTER SITUATION RESULTING FROM INABILITY OF GUYANESE GOVERNMENT TO SEND ADEQUATE VITAL SUPPLIES TO ISOLATED AREAS AND TO ASSURE TRANSPORT OF PERSONS NEEDING MEDICAL ATTENTION TO THE HOSPITAL IN GEORGETOWN.

2. I HAVE REVIEWED THIS SITUATION AND HAVE CONCLUDED THAT A FOREIGN DISASTER EMERGECNY SITUATION EXISTS OF A MAGNITUDE TO REQUIRE OUTSIDE HELP AND THAT IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES TO OFFER EMERGENCY DISASTER ASSISTANCE. THE FORMAL DETERMINATION WILL BE PREPARED UPON NOTIFICATION FROM WASHINGTON THAT NECESSARY FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE.

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3. EMERGENCY ARISES FROM LOSS AT PORT KAITUMA ON NOV 18 OF ONE OF TWO TWIN OTTER PLANES. IT IS EXPECTED THAT ONE MORE MONTH WILL BE REQUIRED TO PUT DAMAGED PLANE BACK IN COMMISSION. THIS LOSS LEAVES GUYANA AIRWAYS CORPORATION (GAC) WITH ONLY ONE TWIN OTTER PLANE TO SERVICE ISOLATED AREAS DEPENDENT ON STOL-TYPE AIRCRAFT. SEVENTEEN OF TWENTY-FOUR AIRFIELDS SERVED BY GAC ARE DEPENDENT ON STOL-STYPE AIRCRAFT SINCE THEIR LANDING STRIPS CANNOT BE USED BY TWO HAWKER-SIDLEY 748'S WHICH ARE ONLY OTHER PLANES AVAILABLE TO GAC. EVEN PRIOR TO LOSS PLANE, GAC WAS HAVING DIFFICULTY MEETING NEEDS OF PEOPLE IN ISOLATED INTERIOR AREAS. DEPLETION FLEET, AS DC3'S AND CARIBOU'S BECAME INOPERABLE, HAD FORCED REDUCTION OF FLYING TIME FROM 6,860 HOURS IN 1977 TO SCHEDULED 4,800 HOURS IN 1978, A REDUCTION OF 30 PERCENT. WITH LOSS TWIN OTTER, THERE IS SERIOUS PROBLEM IN INTERIOR, PARTICULARLY IN NORTHWEST, PAKARAIMA AREA AND MAZARUNI-PTOARO AREA. MINING COMMUNITIES IN LATTER AREA ARE DEPENDENT ON STOL FLIGHTS NOT ONLY FOR FUEL AND MEDICINES BUT ALSO FOR MOST OF THEIR

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FOODSTUFFS. BACKLOG OF AIR SHIPMENTS TO MAZARUNI-POTARO AREA ALONE TOTALS 73,000 POUNDS, AN AMOUNT WHICH WILL REQUIRE OVER 20 FLIGHTS.
4. GUYANA REQUIRES PLANE OF GENERAL SIZE AND CAPABILITY OF TWIN OTTER. IF TWIN OTTER AVAILABLE FOR LEASE WITHOUT CREW, GAC CAN SUPPLY FULLY TRAINED CREW. EMBASSY CARACAS SUGGESTS ONE TWIN OTTER MAY BE AVAILABLE FROM VENEZUELA (REF A). WE HAVE CONFIRMATION (REF B) THAT TWIN OTTER AVAILABLE FROM SURINAME. THIS PLANE ONLY AVAILABLE WITH FULL CREW. COST IS 65,000 SURINAMESE GUILDERS, OR $36,100 AT EXCHANGE RATE OF 1.8 GUILDERS PER DOLLAR, FOR 125 HOURS FLIGHT TIME FOR ONE MONTH, PLUS FUEL, PLUS SAFETY INSPECTION TRIP. WE ESTIMATE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL 25 HOURS OF FLIGHT TIME BASED ON SIX HOURS OF FLIGHT PER DAY FOR 25 DAYS AT 170 GUILDERS PER
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HOUR, OR $2,400. ASSUMING 90 GALLONS FUEL PER HOUR FLIGHT TIME AT 70 CENTS PER GALLON, FUEL WILL COST $63 PER HOUR, OR $9,450. MANDATORY RETURN TRIP TO SURINAM FOR SAFETY INSPECTION AFTER 14 DAYS WILL COST 2,000 GUILDERS OR $1,100. WITH $6,000 TO COVER REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES OF CREW AND CONTINGENCIES TOTAL COST WILL BE $55,000.
5. REQUEST APPROVAL AND ALLOTMENT $55,000. IF LOWER COST STOL ALTERNATIVE IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE, PLEASE ADVISE. LEASE WILL BE SIGNED BETWEEN GAC AND FOREIGN FIRM.
6. THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN CLEARED WITH USAID.
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